

ODDS AND ENDS

FROM ALLABRA TO LAPSIA

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In his annals (III 109-110), Ashurnasirpal II states that “Moving on from the city Amedu I entered the pass of Mt. Kašiyari at the city Allabsia wherein none of the kings my fathers had ever set foot” (Grayson, *ARI* II, p. 145); it has been well known for some time (cf. *ibid.*, note, with ref. to Schramm, *EAK* II, p. 29) that the reading ^{URU}*Al-la-ab-si-a* is to be preferred to the older ^{URU}*Al-la-ab-ra-a*. The latter toponym is also attested in Assyrian royal inscriptions, but must be located in a totally different region (cf. Parpola, *NAT*, p. 12 s.v. Allabria).

I suggest that a further reference to the site mentioned by Ashurnasirpal is to be sought in a partially preserved letter to Sargon II (*SAA* I, no. 240), possibly authored by Taklak-ana-Bel, governor of Našibina (the hand is said to be the same as *SAA* I, no. 239, by that author: cf. *SAA* I, p. 187). In the letter, the king is told that the inhabitants of a town called Lapsia (^{URU}*La-ap-si-a*, which is “at the foot of the mountain” (*ina* GÌR^{II} KUR-ú) have defied the governor’s envoy, refusing to speak with him, and not complying with the requirements of the levy. Taklak-ana-Bel concludes asking the king for armed men to enforce the rules, as was the case with previous governors of Našibina.

Now, it is quite probable that the town of Lapsia (or Labsia) in this letter was one and the same as Allabsia (or Allapsia): the level of variation in the names is minimal, cf. e.g. Azalla, Izalla, Zallu (Postgate, *RIA* V [1977], pp. 225-226). Viewing the site from Našibina, as in the message to Sargon, it is considered “at the foot of the mountain” — and this obviously refers to the Kašiyari (or Kašiyeri) range, which lies to the north of the provincial capital itself. On the other hand, in Ashurnasirpal’s approach from the north-west (i.e., from Amedi) it is specifically located on an inner pass of Mt. Kašiyari which thereupon leads to Udu, a stronghold of Lapṭuri of Nirdun (cf. Kessler, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 62, 71, and *passim*) — a ruler who controlled up to 60 strongholds šá GÌR^{KUR} *Kaš-ia-ri* (Anp. Ann., II 102). But Allab/psia is, in fact, not described as one of Lapṭuri’s towns, and must therefore have enjoyed the status of an autonomous community. Ashurnasirpal states proudly that “none of the kings my fathers had ever set foot” therein (III, 110). Considering the boorish manners still displayed by (Al)lap/bsians to the Assyrians envoys approximately 170 years later, the place must have been indeed far off the beaten track.